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Kennedy to celebrate Earth Day April 21

Stephen Hawking to honor NASA's 50th anniversary



◆ Earth Day Fair, Tours and Giveaways

— Visit the KSC Mission Briefing Room (O&C M7-0355, room

1144) between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. Monday to celebrate Earth Day. The fair will include environmental partners sharing information on natural resources, energy conservation and environmental stewardship. There will be eco-giveaways and contests.

You can also sign up for a KSC aquatic boat tour, scrub jay tour, manatee tour, Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge Visitor Center tour and the KSC Beachside Corrosion Control Lab tour. In addition, NASA Transportation will display a collection of alternative fueled vehicles in the O&C courtyard.

The Earth Day Fair exhibitors include:

- 3M Corporation: Demo of innovative products
- SGS Energy Office: Energy conservations including programmable thermostats
- SGS Environmental Assurance
- U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
- CHS: How to make your home greener
- NASA Environmental Program Branch
- Brevard County Recycling
- Dynamac Corporation: KSC Wildlife Display
- NASA Recycling and Affirmative Procurement Principal Center

◆ **NASA Anniversary Event:** On Monday, Professor Stephen Hawking of the University of Cambridge will be the featured speaker at a lecture that is part of a series honoring NASA's 50th anniversary. The title of Hawking's lecture is "Why we should go into space." The event will be held at 3 p.m. EDT at George Washington University. NASA Television will broadcast the event live on the Web at: <http://www.nasa.gov/ntv>.

■ **Reminder** — The crew of the STS-122 mission returns to Kennedy **today** to give a presentation at 11 a.m. in the Training Auditorium.

■ **KSC National Day Of Prayer Observance** — On May 1, KSC will mark this year's National Day of Prayer with an hour-long observance at 11 a.m. in the KSC Training Auditorium. If you would like to participate or assist in any way, please contact Ed Markowski at 867-0829.

■ **NASA Extends Cassini-Huygens Mission Two Years** — Cassini's mission originally had been scheduled to end in July 2008. The newly announced two-year extension will include 60 additional orbits of Saturn and more flybys of its exotic moons. These will include 26 flybys of Titan, seven of Enceladus, and one each of Dione, Rhea and Helene. The extension also includes studies of Saturn's rings, its complex magnetosphere and the planet itself. For more information, visit: http://www.nasa.gov/home/hqnews/2008/apr/HQ_08098_Cassini_Mission_Extended.html.

Cassini launched Oct. 15, 1997, from

Kennedy on a seven-year journey to Saturn, traversing 2.2 billion miles.

Based on findings from Cassini, scientists think liquid water may be just beneath the surface of Saturn's moon, Enceladus. That's why the small moon, only one-tenth the size of Titan and one-seventh the size of Earth's moon, is one of the highest-priority targets for the extended mission.

Cassini discovered geysers of water-ice jetting from the Enceladus' surface. The geysers, which shoot out at a distance three times the diameter of Enceladus, feed particles into Saturn's most expansive ring. In the extended mission, the spacecraft may come as close as 15 miles from the moon's surface.

Cassini's observations of Saturn's largest moon, Titan, have given scientists a glimpse of what Earth might have been like before life evolved. They now believe Titan possesses many parallels to Earth, including lakes, rivers, channels, dunes, rain, snow, clouds, mountains and possibly volcanoes.

Cassini has returned a daily stream of data from Saturn's system for almost four years. Its travel scrapbook includes nearly 140,000 images and information gathered during 62 revolutions around Saturn, 43 flybys of Titan and 12 close flybys of the icy moons.

Countdown is published every Tuesday & Thursday for NASA KSC employees. Deadlines are 10 a.m. Mondays & Wednesdays. E-mail news to anita.barrett@jpbosc.ksc.nasa.gov. For questions or information, e-mail or call 321-867-2815. You can also find pdf editions of *Countdown* on the Web at http://www.nasa.gov/centers/kennedy/news/countdown/countdown_toc.html.